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In order to increase the surface of the lower part of the conductor, let a hole or pit, of sufficient extent, be dug as deep as convenient; and into this pit, let there be put a quantity of *charcoal*, round the lower extremity of the rod. Charcoal possesses two properties which, in a peculiar manner, fit it for answering the purpose here in view. (1) It is a very good conductor of electricity, and (2) it will undergo little or no change of property by lying ever so long in the earth. Thus might the surface of that part of the conductor, in contact with the earth, be increased with little trouble or expence to any extent at pleasure; a circumstance which every one acquainted with electrical experiments, must acknowledge to be of great importance to the end here proposed.

Whither the above hints may merit a place among the communications from candidates for the annual premium, is humbly submitted

By yours, &c.

PHILO FRANKLIN.

Nº. XXXVI.

*An easy and expeditious method of dissipating the noxious Vapour commonly found in Wells and other subterraneous places, by* EBENEZER ROBINSON, of Philadelphia.

Read Nov.  
3d, 1786.

**A**FTER various unsuccessful trials, (a detail of which has been already communicated,) I was led to consider, how I could convey a large quantity of fresh air, from the top to the bottom of the well; supposing that the foul would necessarily give way to the pure air.—With this view I procured a pair of smiths bellows, fixed

fixed in a wooden frame, so as to work in the same manner as at the forge. This apparatus being placed at the edge of the well; one end of a leathern tube (the hose of a fire engine,) was closely adapted to the nose of the bellows, and the other end was thrown into the well, reaching within one foot of the bottom. At this time the well was so infected, that a candle would not burn at a short distance from the top; but after blowing with my bellows, only half an hour, the candle burned bright at the bottom; then, without further difficulty, I proceeded in the work, and finished my well.

Wells are often made in a very slight manner, owing to the difficulty of working in them, and there have been several fatal instances of the danger attending the workmen; but by the above method, there is neither difficulty nor danger in completing the work, with the utmost solidity.

It is obvious, that in cleansing vaults, and working in any other subterraneous place, subject to damps, as they are called, the same method must be attended with the same beneficial effect.

## Nº. XXXVII.

*A method of draining Ponds in level Grounds, by* JESSE HIGGINS, of Delaware.

Read July  
15, 1791.

**A**T a certain distance below the surface of the earth, there is a stratum of loose sand, which freely admits the passage of water. This stratum is at various depths, in different elevations; but it will be generally